



# Shelters for victims of domestic violence – support to victims

## WHAT?

### Help for people who have experienced domestic violence or a threat of it

Domestic violence means violence committed by the current or a former spouse or intimate partner, the victim's own child or his/her partner's child, other close relative or other person close to the victim.

The shelter is a home-like environment where victims find a refuge from violence and where they get help to stop the violence. In their crisis, victims of violence get support, guidance and counselling from professionals at the shelter as well as assistance and information for dealing with practical arrangements.

The shelter has staff available 24 hours a day and victims can go there either on their own initiative or on referral. It is possible to go there anonymously. Length of stay is always individual. Staying in a shelter does not cost anything for the client.

## WHY?

### Help to stop domestic violence

The trained staff at the shelter provides immediate help in a crisis, around-the-clock secure accommodation and psychosocial support for those who have experienced domestic violence or a threat of it.

Physical violence is not the only reason to seek shelter. Violence can also be psychological, economic, sexual, persecution or related to culture or religion.

Domestic violence affects the health and well-being of all the parties involved. It can lead to a physical or psychological injury, disturbed development, deprivation, or even death.

## HOW?

### Support, help and advice

- The staff in the shelters for victims of domestic violence are trained to meet adult and child victims of domestic violence. The staff helps the victims in their crisis and supports them in dealing with their violent experiences.
- The shelters offer counselling on legal issues and practical arrangements, such as accommodation.
- Each client or family has their own room during their stay in the shelter.
- The facilities at the shelters have been designed so that they are safe for the clients.

# Additional information

## What happens after a stay in the shelter?

The staff at the shelter explores together with the client what kind of support he or she will need after the stay in the shelter. Where necessary the staff will also collaborate with the municipality and other service providers. The municipality is responsible for providing community care for those of its residents who have experienced domestic violence as well as for arranging support after clients leave the shelter. According to the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014), the municipality must arrange social services to support those who have experienced domestic violence or other forms of violence or abuse.

## State funding for the shelters

The responsibility for financing the services provided in the shelters rests with the State. THL is responsible for the steering, assessment, development and national co-ordination of the shelters for victims of domestic violence.

You will find all shelters of the national network at [www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut](http://www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut)



The shelters provide services for people experienced violence or its threat regardless of age and gender.



## For professionals: encountering a client who has experienced violence

The dangerousness of the client's situation must be assessed by carrying out an assessment of the risk of violence. A safety plan must also be drawn up. The risk assessment and the safety plan help both the client and the employee understand how dangerous the experienced violence has been.

If it is not safe for the client to return home, tell the client about the shelter services and provide support in contacting the shelter, if necessary. Also take care of the acute safety of the other family members, especially children, and their need for help. Make sure you comply with your duty to notify under the Child Welfare Act (417/2007), the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014) and the Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons (980/2012). Instructions for preventing violence, carrying out a risk assessment and drawing up a safety plan can be found on THL's website (see More information).

### More information

[thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut](http://thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut)  
[nollalinja.fi/turvakoti](http://nollalinja.fi/turvakoti)  
[thl.fi/vakivalta](http://thl.fi/vakivalta)

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